



**TESTIMONY OF YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH SYSTEM
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Monday, February 23, 2015
SB 855, An Act Concerning Reports of Nurse Staffing Levels**

Yale New Haven Health System (YNHHS) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 855, An Act Concerning Reports of Nurse Staffing Levels**.

As we understand it, this bill seeks to require hospitals to submit annual reports on prospective nurse staffing plans and quarterly reports of actual daily nurse staffing levels to the Department of Public Health. YNHHS opposes SB 855 because additional annual and quarterly filing requirements would impose a costly and unnecessary administrative burden to our affiliate hospitals without improving quality.

YNHHS is Connecticut's leading healthcare system with over 20,000 employees and 6300 medical staff who provide high quality care to Connecticut residents who come to us from across the state (and beyond) every day. The Yale New Haven Health System, through Bridgeport, Greenwich and Yale-New Haven Hospitals, and their affiliated organizations, strives to provide access to integrated, high value, patient centered care in collaboration with others who share our values. We offer our patients a range of healthcare services, including primary and psychiatric care, to the most complex care available anywhere in the world. YNHHS hospital affiliates care for more than one quarter of the State's Medicaid clients and provided \$180 million in free and uncompensated care to those who need our high quality services and can not pay for them. In addition to being our community's largest employers and significant economic engines, we are the ultimate safety net and in the proposed budget, if adopted, will receive additional cuts and an increase in the hospital tax.

YNHHS hospitals continuously assess patient care needs and consider a multitude of factors beyond numbers and ratios to make staffing decisions. For example, we must staff differently in an intensive care unit than a medical unit. Our psychiatric units are staffed differently than those in the Smilow Cancer Hospital. We consider the severity a patient's condition, age, cognitive and functional ability, and stage of recovery. Equally important to staffing decisions are factors related to staff, such as licensure, educational and skill level, tenure on the patient unit, and level of experience with a particular type of patient care. None of these critically important factors are captured by counting the number of patients and staff.

To assure high quality and safe patient care, we must accommodate changes in our volume, acuity, and the needs of our patients and to accomplish this, staffing levels and skill mix are constantly adjusted. Quarterly reporting will not provide an accurate reflection of actual staffing levels.

SB 855 will not accomplish meaningful patient care quality goals. Instead it will increase costs by adding an administrative burden in a time when reimbursement continues to decline. We are expected to meet the increased demand for hospital services with the implementation of health care reform, while managing significant decreases in funding. Additionally, in FY 2014, YNHHS affiliates paid nearly \$60 million to the state of Connecticut in form of the hospital tax. We must focus our resources on patient care initiatives that will ensure safe, high quality care for all who rely on us.

We urge you to oppose SB 855 and thank you for your consideration of our position.